

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
Environmental Health Laboratory Branch (EHLB)  
**California Blood Lead Proficiency Assurance Program (CBLPAP)**  
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## **A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM**

### **Program Background:**

The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Acts of 1986 and 1991 (California Health and Safety Code Sections 124125 et seq. and 105275 et seq., respectively) require the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), formerly the California Department of Health Services, to designate laboratories qualified to perform whole blood lead testing and regulate laboratories qualified for blood lead testing reimbursement through the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program. Qualification of a laboratory for blood lead testing reimbursement through CHDP requires that it is in compliance with the federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) of 1988 for the subspecialty of toxicology, that it is a California licensed or registered clinical laboratory or equivalent as designated by the CDPH Laboratory Field Services (LFS), and that it is rated proficient in blood lead analysis by the CDPH Environmental Health Laboratory Branch (EHLB) California Blood Lead Proficiency Assurance Program (CBLPAP).

### **Blood Lead Proficiency Testing Programs:**

A laboratory's CBLPAP proficiency rating for blood lead testing is based on review of its performance in one of the blood lead proficiency testing programs recognized by EHLB and approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Recognized proficiency testing programs include the College of American Pathologists Blood Lead Survey (CAP), the Blood Lead Regulatory 5-sample Proficiency Testing program offered by the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH), and the American Academy of Family Physician's Proficiency Testing program (AAFP-PT). Both Waived and Non-waived CLIA laboratories are required to participate in a proficiency testing (PT) program in order for CBLPAP to rate each laboratory's blood lead proficiency. Participation of all laboratories in a CMS approved PT program as a qualification for blood lead testing reimbursement enables CBLPAP to keep consistent with national standards of laboratory certification.

### **CBLPAP Proficiency Rating Guidelines:**

Proficiency testing programs recognized by CMS and EHLB offer blood lead PT events three times a year. During each event, participating laboratories analyze 5 blood lead specimens and are evaluated on their results. After each event, laboratories will receive an evaluation report from their PT provider, which will include a blood lead proficiency score. CBLPAP monitors the blood lead testing performance of all CBLPAP laboratories using these proficiency scores, and provides a summary evaluation report to all CBLPAP laboratories three times a year to update laboratories on their CBLPAP blood lead proficiency rating. CBLPAP applies the following guidelines to rate a laboratory as *proficient* or *non-proficient* in blood lead analysis:

- A laboratory will only need to participate in a single PT event and obtain a satisfactory score (a minimum of 80%) from that event in order to initially enroll in CBLPAP and be rated *proficient* in blood lead analysis. Enrollment in CBLPAP is confirmed with the laboratory when a notice letter from CBLPAP is provided.
- In order to maintain enrollment in CBLPAP, each participating laboratory must continue to participate in the PT events offered by their PT program. Laboratories must receive satisfactory scores from at least two out of the three most recent consecutive PT events in order to maintain a rating of *proficient* in blood lead analysis. A list of laboratories rated *proficient* in blood lead analysis by CBLPAP as a qualification for blood lead testing reimbursement is published on the CDPH website: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/labs/Documents/CBLPAP.LST.pdf>. The published list is updated after each CBLPAP evaluation of laboratories is completed and as changes are made to laboratory statuses.
- If a laboratory receives unsatisfactory scores from at least two out of the three most recent consecutive PT events, the laboratory will be rated *non-proficient* and will no longer qualify for blood lead testing reimbursement.
- If a lab has been rated *non-proficient* in blood lead analysis and is seeking to regain proficiency, a laboratory must complete two consecutive satisfactory proficiency testing events from an approved PT provider and contact CBLPAP for re-evaluation. A laboratory does not re-qualify for reimbursement until official notice has been provided by CBLPAP.

#### **Additional Information:**

The State of California requires all clinical blood lead results for both adults and children to be electronically reported to the CDPH Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch (CLPPB). For details about blood lead reporting requirements please contact CLPPB at (510) 620-5600.

EHLB does not certify laboratories to do occupational blood lead testing. Approval for occupational blood lead testing is obtained through the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA). For further information on occupational blood lead testing, please visit the OSHA website at: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodlead/index.html>